

Focus Group Session Three Notes

Real Estate Professionals & Governmental Officials

December 20th, 2004

Sturtevant Village Hall

Conducted by Planning Consultants, Barrientos Design & Consulting

1) Historical Uses & Current Problems

- Village was originally designed around the railroad
- There are businesses that don't need highway access or high traffic counts
- There is no high end retail/ commercial office space
- There has been no good advanced planning or public input
- How are you going to combine all of the important aspects of growing a Village?
- How can you diversify yourself- don't want all highways to look the same or have the same developments
- There are no architectural standards or Village image
 - a) Important to develop a vision (e.g. Renaissance Business Park)
 - b) Too many building along Hwy 11 look like warehouse, not appropriate for entryway to town.
- Along HWY 11 – no residential
- Should coordinate land use plans with Mount Pleasant & Town of Summers
- Chattanooga, Tennessee has the largest freshwater aquarium
 - a) Why do people want to visit Sturtevant?
 - b) Need to find out what makes Sturtevant unique
- Have to keep traffic moving
- What kind of influence HW-20 and HK-K has on HW-11 for future development
- The plan that is been developed needs to be doable
- What Sturtevant has to offer what kind of special attraction
- Wisconsin street will die unless we reroute it
- Not enough connection between 20,11 and K
- How do you take some of the properties adjacent to railroad and buffer them to make negative into a positive?
- Absorption factor – How much can you absorb, sell or use?

2) What attracts people to Sturtevant?

- Low crime
- Stability
- Lots of employment locales
- Nicer homes for less money
- Superb Public Safety service
- Walking/biking paths and trails are important
- People are looking for organized activities
 - a) Large open space itself will not attract people
 - b) Look at what you don't have as a whole community – people are taking kids to where the activities are

3) Competitive Advantages

- Excellent labor pool/ highest unemployment
- Turning into a bedroom community
- 55 minutes from O'Hare; 26 minutes from Mitchell; 3-4 minutes from I-94
- Plenty of employment locations within ½ hour drive.
- Cheap water
- Cheaper utility costs?
- Land values are in a competitive range
- Railroad, especially if high speed comes/stops in Sturtevant
- Remnant of Barns Prairie habitat along railroad corridor, presented by DNR representative as possible restoration project and feature.
- Rails to Trails program from Village to Union Grove along Hwy 11. County stated they are working on a cross-county rail trail from Racine to Burlington. Check into plans that Bonestroo is designing

4) Competitive Disadvantages

- Railroad- impairs traffic, no overpass
- People avoid HWY 11 and use KR; Brown street or HWY 20
- A lot of industrial zoning; may need to consider retail/professional office space
- Parks are in shabby condition
-

5) Harmful Land Uses

- Don't do another Renaissance Business Park
- Don't necessarily want more multi-family
- West end of Hwy 11 as entry to Village shouldn't be all industrial, not appropriate anymore. Village has more than enough industrial land use. Should proportion in more office, retail, commercial.

6) Possible Actions for Improvement

- If there is an overpass, need a landscape package, could be a place to overview the village upon approach.
- Improvements needed with overpass
- Slow down traffic through Village
- Make West end of Hwy 11 a nice gateway and encourage commercial/retail development instead of industrial. Plenty of industrial land north and south of 11.
- Façade improvements and consistency of character
- Landscape quality of streets, greenery, plantings, street furnishings, paving patterns.
- Use land adjacent to rail as an attractive buffer area, be more creative with land uses as done with Chicago area.
- Improve upon local parks
- Create Bike Trail; tie into County's; link Village's Parks and detention ponds with bicycle paths. How to connect east and west side at RR.

- Look into a Farmer's Market at old Depot, would create civic activity and could spin off other retail activity.
- Need viable retail shops that are unique from big box stores.
- Brainstorm on other attractions that would draw customers and visitors:
 - a) Farmer's market
 - b) Museum, a railroad museum
 - c) Ice skating rink
 - d) Soccer fields and complex
 - e) Recreation Center
- Change zoning to allow growth and help smaller manufactures.
- Durand Avenue should have no housing, all commercial, retail and industrial.
- Village needs consistent marketing
 - a) Help developers promote plans
- What can the Village do to help?
 - a) Continue cooperation
 - b) Better sewer/water engineering
- Retail/professional office along Durand
- Need an easy way to get around the Village
- Need to create a nice "front door"
- Create points of contact and interaction for residents such as in a park or nicely landscaped street.
- Concentrate on something that is unique, will have enough competition
- Plan for the future – sewer and water systems for future development
- How to buffer RR and make that strip of land look good.

7) **Development Opportunities**

- Creating medical campuses/synergies between users
- People are looking for biotech/agritech developments
- How to attract business here to develop their tech business
- Next, how to attract the families to relocate here to work with tech businesses
- Misperception of the higher education levels of local labor pool
- Day /Night activities day due to the rail station and the businesses along Durand
And night because people will come back home from working in Milwaukee and Chicago.
- Attractions- points of contact with the community.
- Front Door- must be attractive
- Entry to Village land uses should be retail and business, not industrial.
- Light rail to take people to the "center" from the station
- Good location – between multiple educational institutions
- Development types recommended: medical office buildings, lawyers, dentists, insurance company, restaurant, branch offices of Chicago and Madison companies. Pedestrian friendly strip malls
- Sturtevant is an excellent location for satellite business/industry campuses
 - a) Can serve Milwaukee and Madison
 - b) Still close to Chicago

8) Governmental Group input

- While doing stormwater management can obtain brownfield grants.
- RR Underpass design approach could have flooding problems.
- County has plans for cross County rail trail, coordinate with their engineers.,
- DNR offers potential to recreate Barnes Nature area.
- Racine County Economic Development Corp. offers their traffic studies.